REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated April 4, 2005. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 6, 8-9, and 12-15 are under consideration in this application. Claim 13 is being amended, as set forth above, in order to more particularly define and distinctly claim Applicants' invention.

The claims are being amended to correct formal errors and/or to better disclose or describe the features of the present invention as claimed. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 6, 8-9, and 12 were allowed.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) on the grounds of being anticipated by JP 2000-75281 to Sumida (hereinafter "Sumida"). The prior art reference Hirakata et al. (6,465,268) and Yanagawa et al. (JP 2002-0113935) were cited as being pertinent to the present application. The above rejection has been carefully considered, but is most respectfully traversed.

The liquid crystal display device according to the invention (page 26, line 26 ~ page 29, line 17; Figs. 6A, 6B, 8), as now recited in claim 13, comprises: a first substrate ***100 B*** including color filters ***2***; a liquid crystal layer ***9***; a second substrate ***100A*** disposed opposite to the first substrate ***100B*** across the liquid crystal layer ***9***; first signal lines ***102***, ***104*** formed on the second substrate ***100A***; second signal lines ***103*** intersecting the first signal lines ***102***, ***104*** with an insulating film provided therebetween; a plurality of pixel regions formed as being surrounded by respective

neighboring first signal lines ***102***, ***104*** and second signal lines ***103***; a base pattern ***11*** (e.g., Fig. 8; P. 28, last paragraph) formed between neighboring pixel regions; a plurality of first spacers ***1b*** formed above a main surface of the first substrate ***100 B*** and arranged above a part where is between neighboring pixel regions and overlaps with the base pattern ***11*** in a plan view; and a plurality of second spacers ***1c*** formed on the main surface of the first substrate ***100 B*** and arranged above a part where is between neighboring pixel regions and does not overlap with the base pattern ***11*** in the plan view. Each of the second spacers ***1c*** is ordinarily spaced from a stacked structure formed on the second substrate ***100A*** to accommodate the liquid crystal layer ***9*** therebetween, and each of the first spacers ***1b*** ordinarily contacts directly the stacked structure formed on the second substrate ***100A*** (p. 29, 1st paragraph; Fig. 8).

The invention applies two kinds of spacers denoted by the reference numerals ***1b*** (formed above the base pattern) and ***1c*** (formed directly on the main surface) of the first substrate ***100B***, and arranged corresponding to a stacked structure formed on the second substrate ***100A.*** The invention does not internally/deliberately apply "any external force" to press the first and second spacers ***1b, 1c*** against "areas between neighboring pixel regions on the second substrate" in the ordinary situation. Rather, the invention tried to cope with "an external force" accidentally/undesirably applied to the liquid crystal display device (p. 26, line 26 – p. 28, line 10; p. 3, line 18 – p. 4, line 16).

None of the cited prior art references teaches or suggests such "a base pattern ***11*** (e.g., Fig. 8; P. 28, last paragraph) formed between neighboring pixel regions; a plurality of first spacers ***1b*** formed above a main surface of the first substrate ***100 B*** and arranged above a part where is between neighboring pixel regions and overlaps with the base pattern ***11*** in a plan view; and a plurality of second spacers ***1c*** formed on the main surface of the first substrate ***100 B*** and arranged above a part where is between neighboring pixel regions and does not overlap with the base pattern ***11*** in the plan view" such that each of the second spacers ***1c*** is ordinarily spaced from a stacked structure formed on the second substrate ***100A*** to accommodate the liquid crystal layer ***9*** therebetween, and each of the first spacers ***1b*** ordinarily contacts directly the stacked structure formed on the second substrate ***100A***" as recited in claim 13.

In contrast, Sumida's second spacer (under region 32) is located in the pixel region 82, rather than "between neighboring pixel regions, " i.e., outside any pixel

region 82. As such, Sumida, at most, only discloses first spacer 7 formed above a main surface of the first substrate and arranged above a part where is between neighboring pixel regions and overlaps with the base pattern 2 in a plan view.

In addition, the alleged base pattern 2 is a protection-from-light layer, which is equivalent to the black mask 3 of the invention, rather than any base pattern 11 just for adjusting the heights of the spacers additional to the black mask 3 (Fig. 8). As to a TFT element region 81 of Sumida, it is a TFT element, rather than any base pattern 11 just for adjusting the heights of the spacers.

None of the other cited references provide such a non-uniform pixel region with two groups of spacers to compensate for Sumida's deficiencies.

Applicants contend that neither Sumida, nor other cited references teaches or discloses each and every feature of the present invention as disclosed in independent claim 13. As such, the present invention as now claimed is distinguishable and thereby allowable over the rejections raised in the Office Action. The withdrawal of the outstanding prior art rejections is in order, and is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art references upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution

and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

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